

**Linda Clair**  
**Seven-day Meditation Retreat**  
**Kallara Conference Centre, Australia**  
**30 November – 7 December 2019**  
**Transcription from Audio Recordings**

**File 7 C – Friday morning guided meditation**

Linda: How are you U.?

Question: It's been a bit of a rollercoaster because I've gone back into quite a few childhood patterns, which is interesting – not for anyone else probably. (Linda laughs.) One of them is getting to feel very sorry for myself, which I did a lot as a child, then hiding. I found myself one day walking up the hill, finding myself a nice piece of sympathetic granite up there, and sat on that for a couple of hours and did a bit of wallowing. It was interesting to find myself falling back into those. I started to see a few other things, and one of the things was that I'd somehow lost contact with you, and felt somewhat removed. I even at one point thought, "She's going to come down and tell me to go home, because I'm such a log amongst these ace meditators." Basically I felt pretty out of place. The more I thought about it the more I thought, "Well, it's me and it's my stuff." When I thought I'd lost contact with you, I could say the words but I didn't even understand what that meant. So if you could tell me I'd be grateful. I just felt disconnected and somewhat lost for a couple of days. I thought I might pack my bag and go and thumb a lift from the gate, but my bag's too heavy.

Linda: Well, I think you're right. You've gone into an old childhood habit of hiding, feeling sorry for yourself – which I used to do a lot too – and then just feeling the odd one out. And the thing almost everyone here has in common is that they don't feel quite fit in to anything. And this might be the first time for a lot of people here that they feel some semblance of fitting in in a weird way, but not fitting in. So I think it's the one thing that most people here have in common. It's not that everyone is just isolated; a lot of people are very social and do stuff. But I know for me I never really felt like I quite fitted in anywhere, and when I started doing this it was like, "Ah! This is what I've been looking for."

So just see it and try not to – and I was saying this to someone yesterday – try not to separate yourself from everyone here. It's all right to wallow for a while but then you've got to get up and recognise what it is, which you have, and then stop separating yourself and making yourself different, and special in a way because you feel, "I don't fit in." It's sort of an ego thing – "I don't fit in, I'm special." And so you need to drop that and make that contact by just looking at me, because I've passed you a number of times and you've avoided me. I saw you up there and I had this feeling you were looking at escaping. But you didn't, which is great, and you're here. I'd say probably everyone at some time has felt exactly as you do.

Question: That's good. When I think about it, the hiding and the feeling as an outsider, explain a lot of other things in my life. So that's been a source of some pain and difficulty over the years but I understand what you say about it being some form of feeling special, being egotistic, as well. These things I need to look at, and to understand them more deeply.

Linda: Well, just look at them. And probably after this, and after talking openly about it about it, it will make a huge difference. And when you leave here you'll really feel what's happened as well. So I'm not saying go out and join in a whole lot of stuff, it's not that, but just look at this tendency to want to be different and separate yourself a bit.

Question: As you know I have this problem with sitting up straight, and the consistent correction that you've been giving me over the years is to lift my chin up. And when I do it I feel as though my head is right back, so it comes back to what I feel is normal. So this morning I thought I'm going to stick my chin up and see what happens. And I had the most incredible early morning sit, then as time went on it wasn't quite so successful. So thank you, there's been a bit of progress, not necessarily with the sitting but with something inside.

Linda: Yes, I don't think I've ever seen you with your head right back. So it was a great sitting this morning? What happened? Nothing? (Laughter.)

Question: There were thoughts flitting around but they were very much in the distance and the body was comfortable, which was a great relief.

Question: I feel like I can relate to what U. said about distancing, wanting to be separate. I only feel like I've landed now, today and we're about to leave tomorrow, but better late than never, right?

Linda: Yes, and everything that has happened in the week is completely necessary, so don't see it as a waste of time.

Question: Yes, I learnt a lot. I feel like I've been on the outside, in a way testing the group. And I feel kind of bad about it but I also wanted to be sure and to be able to build that trust slowly. And I think I'm started to feel more comfortable in this group of misfits.

Linda: So it's a big thing coming in to a group or a situation like this when you haven't been here before – there are a few people who haven't been here before – and just jumping in at the deep end and doing it is a huge thing, so you're very brave. And it's true the trust doesn't come straight away and the intimacy with everyone here doesn't come straight away. It takes time and you have to allow it, you have to give it time and things start to happen, but give it time. Don't expect everything to happen all at once. And yes, keep going.

Question: I think it's good and proper that it happens slowly. If it were to happen all at once it would be too much.

Linda: Well, it would and I've seen people who get into it straight away and they go, "This is amazing!" and usually they burn out pretty quickly and leave. So it is much better and deeper to take your time, test the waters, just let yourself get into it and see what happens. If it's not for you it's not for you, and that's fine, it doesn't matter. But if it is, this is the place to be.

Question: I feel like I've been searching for such a long time for something like this. So thank you, I'm really grateful. Probably the most valuable lesson for me this week has been vulnerability. I initially felt I was doing people a service by not burdening them with my pain and suffering, but really it's doing them a disservice by not sharing that with them.

Linda: Yes, everyone wants to know they're not the only one. And particularly if it's someone else feeling... (laughs) "Oh, thank god I don't feel that bad." And it is a bit confronting being vulnerable in front of a group of people, especially people you don't know that well.

Have you said anything yet L.? Maybe right at the beginning.

Question: I certainly don't want to repeat what I said at the beginning.

Linda: Well, you can – I've got no idea what you said at the beginning. Probably no one else does either.

Question: Thanks, particularly for that reminder this morning about B.'s smile at the beginning of every sit. I had a very emotional early sit this morning and it felt like a big letting go of a lot of resistance, or the breaking of a sort of wall which has been there all week. And it involved some follow-up thinking, going back through my childhood and, "This is the sort of person I am," sort of depressive and low-energy. And then you mentioned that you can take a few deep breaths at the beginning of every sit – it's always good – or during a sit if it comes to that. It was like I was getting ready to stay with the same sort of picture of myself, or the same sort of emotional state that I identify myself with. It reminded me that I had the expectation that things would continue on the same for the rest of the retreat. So it was a great reminder for me – there's another expectation that I've got, that it's going to be a certain way, and I don't have to have that expectation. I can be open to it changing, or not have any expectation.

Linda: So I'm not saying to gloss over stuff or repress stuff by smiling. But I just noticed that every time B. sits down she has this big natural smile, and it's so lovely. So sometimes you need to do that just to break that heaviness and, like you said, "It's going to be like this." It's not necessarily going to be like that. And you suddenly go, "Well, I don't *have* to feel bad. I'm getting addicted to just feeling bad and sorry for myself. Snap out of it, and this might be completely different." Might not, might, but you've got to be open to the possibility of anything.

And all those memories you've got of yourself, I've realised only just recently how deeply unreliable they are. You think you're a certain sort of person and you think – well, I thought I was a certain sort of child – and then I read reports and all that stuff and I thought, "I've got no idea who I was." All these memories that I had were completely personal, emotional reactions to certain things. And you can ask kids in a family about their memories of certain things in their childhood. Like in my family I go, "Oh yes, it was fine." And my sister says, "No, it was horrible." And then my brothers say something else. Your memories are just motivated by all these emotional reactions, and you don't know how you were. So there's no point remembering them because memories aren't usually factual anyway, they're just mainly based on emotions, particularly when you're a child – or adult too. So you've got no idea who you are, and it doesn't matter, you're just here, and you'll never find out who you are or who you were. You'll just realise, "What does it matter? I'm just here now, and who I am is not the question."

Question: Yes, that's the other relief.

Linda: Doesn't matter who you are. You might think you've done some horrible things and some great things – it doesn't matter, it's all done now anyway. And in a way you're a product of that and in a way you're not, you don't need to be. Everything that has happened has brought you to this

point, and that is the important thing, has brought you here doing this. So whatever happened was completely necessary and there's nothing that needs to be regretted or forgiven. And everyone has done the best they can whatever has happened in their life, and we've all done stuff that we'd probably not repeat, or go through again, or do again, or say again. But it's all done now, it's gone. Now is the important thing.

Question: It's a good time to tell good news stories. Last night I had the final sit here and went to my room for an early night, and as usual woke up at 2.30 and went to the bathroom and came back to bed. I couldn't quite get comfortable so I went to change my position, but I thought this doesn't feel dissimilar to when I get uncomfortable on the mat, so perhaps I'll just stay in this position and watch and see what happens. So I carried on watching and then of course I wanted to change my position again, but I said, "No, because I know when I'm on the mat if I change my position I just get more uncomfortable so I'm just going to stay with it and watch it." So I continued to do that. By this time I'm feeling quite uncomfortable and I thought, "Well, I've had discomfort before, I've sat through it. This is what we do in the practice. I'm just going to sit through it and take it and see where it goes." Unfortunately my position was I lying flat down facing forward with my arms underneath my body and this was getting to be a *real* discomfort. And I thought, "Oh, this is just like my legs get in the practice, my legs get a bit more discomfort, but that's okay I'll just continue watching it." This time I'm getting *really* uncomfortable. And I thought this is a bit like I'm getting anxious about my position here and that's not unlike when I get anxious with pain in the sits. This is a bit like when you get deep in the sit and you wonder if Linda has remembered to set the timer right. And I thought, "Did I set the alarm clock?" I was convinced I was going to sit through. At this point I thought, "This is a quite a mixed blessing. I'm sort of comfortable because I'm on the bed and I'm also performing some sort of watchfulness, like the lazy man's way to enlightenment." By this stage it's getting really painful, but nevertheless I did persevere and go right the way through to the alarm. But the only problem was, unfortunately, I lost the use of my arms temporarily. But I just wanted to illustrate that I take myself quite seriously sometimes, but that time I wasn't taking myself at all seriously. I was just wondering if that meditation practice has any merit? (Laughter.)

Linda: Everything does.

Question: I'll share a little realisation I had a few days ago. It's just from memory because it came and went – I was sitting down the front and more present. It suddenly came to me this thing about time, and it's stuff that you've said over and over but I never could get my head around it. The present was like the fixed point and everything unfolded in that. All my life I've had this sense of linear time, of course, like everyone does I suppose, like days on the calendar and I go from Monday and then I go to Tuesday and then I go into Wednesday, almost as if it's a different place or something. And I just had this momentary flash where I recognised that there is only now and now doesn't change.

Linda: It does, it's not a fixed point.

Question: Yes, I thought you'd say that. Maybe...

Linda: It's always now – maybe that's what you meant. But it's not the same.

Question: It was like the "I" goes forward in time and goes different places, but the "now" doesn't progress.

Linda: It doesn't progress in that sequence that we see, in that linear...

Question: It was almost like when I was sitting there, the now was like this base or this space, and all this stuff would buzz around, come and go, come and go, but the now didn't shift.

Linda: It's hard to describe.

Question: Yes, it is hard to describe. But anyway, it was a new thing for me.

Linda: To realise that rather than try and understand it. (Yes.) Good.

Question: I just want to say something about curiosity that happened by itself really. The early morning sit yesterday I was just hanging on by my fingernails. It was really everything, the room was moving around, and... Anyway, I got through it and flounced off into bed and pulled the covers over and I thought, I felt this really strong, "I'm never doing that again. I'm just going to go at six thirty, I'm never doing it again." It was really almost like a stamping of the foot. I didn't think any more about it the rest of the day. I got back on the horse and it was different, I felt fresh and in the practice – I felt yesterday morning I even lost the practice with everything that was happening. So when I went to bed last night it surfaced again and I thought, "No, I'm just going to go at six-thirty, I'm going to be civilised." So that's what I went to bed with, tossing and turning. And sure enough I woke up really early like I always do and I thought, "No, you're not going till six-thirty." But then, "Oh, my feet aren't hurting." It was my feet hurting, everything was hurting, and I thought, "Oh, they're not hurting." Then this curiosity came out of no-where, really strong, "If I don't go I'm never going to know if that will happen again." It was a really strong – I don't know if curiosity is the word – or interest or something.

Linda: Someone was saying yesterday, "Intrigue."

Question: Yes, intrigue. That's the other thing that did come up – this was all happening fairly fast – "Oh, my buddies are there." Then I came and it was different. It was the mixture of practice. That intrigue was something really new and like I couldn't say no to it.

Linda: Good, thank you.

Question: That word "intrigue" – I remember that conversation with you and L. – and that got me through the long sit this morning again. I was going to bail out at the walk of the second meditation. It was quite intense pain, but I just remember that "intrigue" and, "just wait." So when the bell went I just waited for the body to get up, but it didn't. So it was just my mind that was wanting to get up. I remember that. So I got through.

The other thing I've been experimenting with for a couple of retreats is surrender. It's when I breathe out I let go that little bit more at the end, and that got me through the pain. So I'm not resisting the pain that way. I sort of soften, let go, and allow the pain to be there. That seems to let the pain not intensify, not go sharp. That's what I've been experimenting with.

Linda: It's not even the pain, it's your reaction to the pain. So if you surrender to it, let it take you over, it's not so unbearable. But if you go, "No, I want to change it, it just has to go." If you struggle with it, it makes it much more unbearable.

Question: I thank everyone for being here and sharing, it really makes things a little bit clearer.

Linda: It's one reason I quite like not doing the interviews anymore because it forces people, if they want to say something, to say something, and it's going to help everyone.